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Neglected Arabia





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# Neglected

Missionary  
News and Letters

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY  
The Arabian Mission

# Arabia



MISSION GROUP—1910.

NUMBER SEVENTY-FIVE

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1910

## CONTENTS

Behind The Veil . . . . .	MRS. D. DYKSTRA
The Future Staff of the Mission . . . . .	E. E. CALVERLEY
The Lepers in Muscat . . . . .	MRS. J. CANTINE
A Day in Bahrein . . . . .	MRS. E. E. CALVERLEY
The Converts' Conference at Zeitoun, Egypt . . . . .	ARTHUR T. UPSON

### ILLUSTRATIONS.

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Veiled Women.                  | Mission Buildings at Bahrein. |
| Missionary and Helper.         | School Room at Bahrein.       |
| Treating Patients near Muscat. | Native House.                 |
| Landing From Steamer.          |                               |

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# NEGLECTED ARABIA.

October - December, 1910.

## Behind the Veil.

In May of this year a young wife, daughter of a wealthy merchant of Menameh, asked to be taught English. Because of the secluded lives these women lead, the study of English seems rather useless, except for the fact that it affords abundant opportunity to read. However, the request was granted, with the hope that it might lead to better acquaintance and to direct opportunities to bring the Gospel message. For here, as everywhere, it is individual work for individuals that is most effective, and therefore most essential, but at the same time it is the most difficult to obtain. In almost every home there are several women, and always a number of slaves who have the privilege of being wherever their mistresses are. So meeting one alone, and opportunities for private conversations are as rare as they are desirable.

The girl herself is very anxious to learn, and what seems even more wonderful, her father also seems anxious that his daughter shall be well-educated. Although married, she lives with her father, and so his authority over her is absolute. She seems to be a favorite child, and has therefore received the best possible local education. She reads Arabic fluently, and shows an aptitude for acquiring the English. When I gave her the first lesson I suggested that we go to a room where we should not be disturbed by the talk of the women in the court-yard. It was quite impossible to do any teaching in the yard, much to the surprise of the mother, who could not understand why the Arabic way of teaching, amidst noise and shouting, was not good enough. However, the daughter's wishes were backed by her father, and so the new arrangement held. These lesson-hours always close with a half hour or more of conversation on topics of vital importance. Usually I read a passage from Scripture, and she asks questions about it, and this leads to further discussions.

One day the subject of our conversation was prayer. To the Moslems it means repetition of passages from the Koran, and it is hard for them to grasp any other view of prayer. She asked me if I prayed, and then whether I ever prayed to their prophet. And upon my answering in the negative, she asked me why I did not. Then I again told her about the Saviour and how He intercedes for us, to which she replied, "The Jews have Moses, the Christians have Jesus, and the Moslems have Mohammed." I asked her whether we could all be

right, and she answered, "Impossible." We then spoke of our friendship here on earth and I said I hoped that we might continue our friendship in heaven. To this she replied that she was afraid I would never see heaven, for the Koran says that only those who believe in Mohammed will have that bliss. I then asked her if she felt sure of her own salvation, and she admitted that she did not, but hoped she might earn it by repeating sufficient prayers. I assured her that to all who believe in Jesus Christ eternal salvation is a reality even now in this life, and that it is not a reward of merit; the obtaining of it depends not on ourselves but on Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice. I asked



VEILED WOMEN.

her then if she did not wish to possess such salvation and peace now, and, while she honestly thought that I was wrong, and I believed that she was wrong, I asked her to pray this prayer with me every day, each of us adding the other's name, "O Lord, lead me to Thy salvation and truth for Thy name's sake." She hesitated at first, but after some thinking promised that she would.

At this time she also asked me to spend the day with her the following Wednesday, and it was with pleasure that I accepted. It was a splendid opportunity to study conditions in an Arab home. During the day I met several other women and girls who had also brought their sewing with them. They were very much interested in my sewing and my workbag and folding needle case. Of course all kinds of questions were asked about our manner of living, house-keeping, customs, and so forth. The singing of hymns pleased them especially. About noon my young friend excused herself for a while, for her father had come



in for his breakfast, and she had to keep him company, although that day, in honor of her guest, her father had excused her from breakfasting with him, asking her only to serve him so she could breakfast with me. It is a very pleasant thought that the father loves his daughter so well, although it seems the more strange to our western ideas that he should deny this privilege to his wife.

During the day they said their prayers, and they asked me whether I wished to say my prayers. If so, they would make whatever preparations I wished. As clearly as possible I explained what prayer meant to me, and that the blessing I had asked upon my breakfast was prayer. Then they asked me to offer prayer there before them, which I did, and at its close my little hostess assured me that she had not forgotten to pray the prayer I had suggested.

The day was further spent in chatting and sewing. Just as I was getting ready to leave, great trouble overtook them. During the afternoon I thought I had noticed the mother making unusual preparations, and I asked whether she were going out visiting. They said that she was not, as her husband forbade her ever to leave the house. But just then the servants came rushing into the room in great consternation, and all seemed so terrified that I asked what the trouble was. Then the story came out. The father was in the habit of going to some bathing place every afternoon and staying until sunset, and so the mother planned to take advantage of such an absence by making a stolen visit. But, as often happens in such times, he returned very early, and wanted to see his wife. They invented excuses for her delay, saying she was with some women, and would come in in a few moments. But as the time went on they became more and more at a loss to find excuses to appease his anger at her nonappearance. I asked them what he would do if he found out about her leaving the house, and they said, "He will choke her and whip us, for he is disgraced." Some time ago the daughter had asked permission of her father to visit me in my home, but had been refused, and then she had proposed to deceive her father as her mother had done now. This I had not allowed, showing her its sinfulness and its necessary consequences. Now the daughter of her own accord thanked me and said that she would never come in such a way, for it meant dreadful results. I could not stay any longer and had to leave them in their plight since I could not help them. But what a lesson of the results of the teaching of Islam. It is not these poor women who are mostly to be blamed for deception. They need our love and sympathy and need to learn to do right in spite of existing faults. Far more it is the system of false teaching and false relation in life that must stir up in us righteous indignation and cause us to arise in our might against these forces of evil. Our prayers should be for the breaking down

of such oppression, of such false teaching that results in lying, deception, cruelty, and in debasing and oppressing the weak and feeble.

MINNIE W. DYKSTRA.

## The Future Staff of the Mission.



E. E. CALVERLEY.

In "The Future Leadership of the Church," Mr. John R. Mott has presented principles which may be directly applied to our Mission work. To train the children now in the care of the Mission that they may be depended upon to carry on the work of the Mission during the next generation, is a problem of paramount immediate importance. It involves the life, the growth, the extension of the Mission, and the evangelization of Arabia.

The purpose of our missionary work here is two-fold: to present Christ to the Arabs so that they will accept Him as their Saviour, and, secondly, to establish here a native Christian Church which shall be self-propagating, self-supporting, and self-governing. The first concern of the Mission has been, and is still, to secure converts, but our faith and the history of Christian missions in all lands assure us that a native church will rise and grow. An Arab Christian church must rise and grow. It cannot be that there should be a native Christian church of seventy thousand in Japan and none in Arabia; a native church of eighty thousand out of Korea's twelve million and none in Arabia; native churches of over a hundred and ten thousand in China, of over four hundred thousand in India, of over half a million in Africa, and none in Arabia. The Christian religion will become the religion of Arabia. But if Christianity is to be the religion of Arabia, it must be believed and practiced by the Arabs. If Jesus Christ is to be accepted by the Arabs, He must be preached by the Arabs. It is a commonplace among missionary principles, that every country must be evangelized by its own people. And there are no others than the Arabs themselves who can evangelize Arabia. The churches at home cannot supply enough missionaries for every Arab community or congregation. The policy adopted by the Men's National Missionary Congress at Chicago this year would allow one foreign missionary for every twenty-five thousand people, but even when Arabia gets its apportionment of three hundred and twenty missionaries, these will not be enough to accomplish even the first part of our two-fold purpose. And as for the Native Church, it must be enlarged, it must be operated, it must be led by native pastors and teachers. These pastors and teachers cannot always be imported, for that makes them as truly foreign

missionaries as are those sent out by the Boards; they cannot be taken from the ranks of Islam and immediately given charge of Christian work. They must be trained. To train and develop these native Christian leaders to the extent of our opportunity and ability is of supreme and immediate importance as an absolute necessity.

The problem is not peculiar to this Mission. Dr. Mott declares that "In conferences of missionaries and native Christian leaders conducted during the past six years in foreign mission fields of Asia, Africa and Latin America, there was universal testimony that the most difficult and important problem in the evangelization of the world is that of securing an able Christian ministry."

An able Christian ministry for Arabia will mean Christian Arabs possessing those qualities which will win the respect of their brethren and the success of their cause. These preachers and teachers should have the physical strength to endure the heat and the hardships of touring and staying in difficult places; they should have the courage and the patience to encounter and live down the persecution and hardness of heart of those who could religiously kill them. They should have tact and zeal which will avoid unnecessary opposition and embrace every advantage. They should have sufficient intellectual equipment to answer objections to their faith, to instruct inquirers and edify believers. They must have a scrupulous conscience, which governs their conduct, their use of their time and their opportunities; they must have that deep-rooted conviction of their own need of Christ as their Saviour and of the need of their Arab brethren; and they must have that faithful love for God which consecrates itself in unlimited sympathy and devotion toward their neighbors.

Arabia contains men of exceptional abilities. Not to mention those founders of religions and sects, those generals of national-conquering armies, there have been besides unnumbered born leaders among the Arabs. One reason why it has been difficult, and indeed impossible, to embrace the country under one government, is because there are so many of leadership ability that they win followers to themselves. To transfer such qualities to the cause of Christ, to train and develop such qualities in the lives of those in the care of the Mission, is a work that demands our most careful and constant attention and our utmost efforts. The beginnings may be small and insignificant, but so are the beginnings of most things, and when the work is small, it may be more easily accomplished.

The necessity of giving special attention to the development of such resources as we have becomes more obvious when we consider the advantages of a larger and more effective native working force. Native Arab Christians will secure converts in larger numbers and in shorter time than can alien workers. They will be able to

mingle more intimately with the Arabs, to enter into closer sympathy with them, to understand their way of thinking, to conciliate their prejudices, to share their customs, to practice their manner of living. Their influence will be widest and most constant, will be most direct and most effective. The Moslems will see that the Christian Arab is the best Arab. He will see that the Christian Arab has higher



MISSIONARY AND HELPER.

ideals and a better life. He will find that the Christian Arab is faithful in his promises, honest in his dealings, honorable among men, chivalrous to women, devout before God. The more truly he lives the Christian life, the greater will be the difference between his practice and that of his Moslem neighbors, and the more noticeable will be the superiority of the Christian religion. The result cannot but be that the present tolerance of Christians will be replaced by the welcome reception of Christians, which indeed seems to be the impending stage of progress. And this in turn will be followed by the gathering in of those who have admired the Christian's better life, and have valued the Christian's better and surer faith and hope. Then will come that earnest seeking of multitudes such as is now being experienced in Korea and parts of India. To secure such power and such results, it is obvious that we must train and develop the children of the Mission to exert the best and widest Christian influence, and lead in reaping the harvest.

Further, all departments of the Mission work must grow. There will come a time when one school in each station will not be enough. As in China, India and elsewhere, branch schools will be established in outlying towns and villages and in new centers. The result of Christian teachers living in these places, will be the conversion of scholars and their families who will form Christian communities and will need Christian pastors. The most effective Christian teachers and pastors will be native Arab Christians educated and trained for the work from the earliest possible age. The present concern of the Mission will be to see that the available material for training is not neglected nor diverted into other less necessary employment for Christians or into less effective service. This training will include the young girls of the Mission, for even now more women could be occupied in reading and explaining the Bible in the harems where Christian women are already welcome. The Mission should always be concerned in training and making available the native Christian girls for this most important part of the Mission work.

That the resources at hand should be carefully developed is better recognized when we consider how difficult it is to obtain a sufficient and efficient staff of native workers. It is almost possible to secure for this field adult workers who know the language and customs of the people, and can be trusted to present and represent the life and teachings of Christ. Those natives born into the Oriental Christian church must overcome an almost mortal repugnance toward the Moslems. Let us thank God and have every admiration for those of our number who are working for the salvation of those whose co-religionists have robbed them of home and country, have oppressed, dispersed and massacred their families and their friends. Nevertheless, we must have Arabs to evangelize Arabia. We should give the adult converts every possible care. But we need also to prepare for the future by training the young Arabs. We may labor with greater encouragement for them, and also with greater zeal because we may expect greater results from their lives, for their whole lives will be spent for Christ, rather than only a part. They will have fewer un-Christian habits to overcome, and they will be trained when they are most impressionable and when their abilities may be developed. But the training will require the greatest attention and prayer. Unless the spirit of consecration to the service of God and their native brethren is carefully inculcated, their promise may fail. When they grow up they may be led into the religion of the majority around them, or they may devote their lives to some more profitable but less distinctively Christian service. The difficulties of the task before him, the hardships he must endure, the contempt and hatred he must live down, the fanaticism and evil he must overcome, the discouragement he must

suffer, will make Christian service among his brethren, the least inviting, the most disheartening life work. The temptation to enter some secular employment will be increasingly strong. His education will enable him to earn more than the Mission could or would pay him. Every advantage the young Arab Christian receives will make some of the Arab customs most distasteful to him, and separate him from the habits and conditions of his fellows. But the tremendous difficulty of the work, and the small number available for such training should only constrain us to make doubly sure of those few we can influence, that they may be ready and willing to undertake such service when the occasion, which is sure to come, does arrive.

The problem before us is a real one. Its importance for the future of our work cannot be overestimated. The supply of Arab Christian teachers and leaders and Bible women depends upon the attention given to their training. The difficulty to secure the supply we need may be too great for this generation of missionaries. But we shall gain nothing if we attempt nothing. And if we face the problem and the hindrances, we shall find that there is no little cause for encouragement. The Arab Christian may be influenced to devote his life to the evangelization of Arabia by all the feelings of patriotism and loyalty, which will impel him to labor for the greatest and deepest needs of his brethren. Besides, there is that in the Arab temperament which will incline him to religious work. He has the Semitic genius for divine worship and service, and to fail to take advantage of this natural inclination would be a great mistake. And by keeping before the young Christian always the high character of the work, its sacredness and its glory, by impressing upon him that there is no other work which will afford so great satisfaction, by appealing to all that is best in him to accept for his life vocation, that which is the noblest of life works, by using all the influence and arguments which have had power to bring us thousands of miles to labor for those we had never seen, we may be enabled to induce the young Arab Christian to spend his life for his own native brethren.

And yet, the difficulties are too great for us to overcome alone. We cannot but depend upon the power and action of God. To Him, indeed, belongs this work. He alone can provide and prepare, can commission and control those who are to carry on His work.

But it is for us to do our part, to attend to those whom God has put under our care, to qualify them for the service, to prepare them to hear the call of God. In doing so, we shall make sure that the generation to come shall "set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." At the same time we shall be doing that which is wisest and most effective in securing the evangelization of Arabia.

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY.

## The Lepers in Muscat.

Many mission periodicals describe the work that is being done among the lepers in various countries. Some of the large missionary societies have asylums in which these poor outcasts are housed, clothed and fed, given medical care, and where they are daily taught of Christ.

It is well known that leprosy exists in those parts of Arabia where our missionaries are working, and mention is often made in letters, of some leper in whom we are especially interested. It was through such an one, who, while she lived in her mother's home, was a frequent visitor to the mission house, that I learned to know something of the small leper colony in Muscat. And it has occurred to me that you, too, would like to know something about the life of those, whose dwelling now, as in the days of old, is without the camp; so I am going to ask you to come with me and make them a visit.

Leaving the mission house, a walk of about fifteen minutes through narrow, zigzag streets brings us within sight of the colony. As we are nearing it, we meet an old man who urges us to go back, saying it is not good for our health to be walking here. "Why do you not go where the air is pure?" And he shakes his head as we go on. It is, indeed, a filthy place, and squalid beyond description. And, as if to make it seem even more so by contrast, just beyond is the mountain pass to Sudab, from the top of which one sees a beautiful picture of a village with palm trees against a background of sea and mountains.

It is nearly sundown, when the road between Muscat and Sudab is much travelled, and the lepers are sitting by the roadside in the hope of getting something from the passers by. Here is the blind man with his little basket in front of him. A little farther on is Azzu, the negro woman. She has the happy disposition of her race, which, no doubt, stands her in good stead, but her condition awakens our pity none the less. Next to her is Faidu with her baby. Have you ever seen anything more pitiful than this poor leper woman, her fingers all gone, trying to hold her little child with the palms of her hands? Surely her Moslem brothers and sisters are kind and generous to one in so sad a plight! I am afraid you will scarcely believe that most of them, like the priest and the Levite, pass by on the other side, but so it is. On careful inquiry I have found that these lepers get an average of nine coppers a day, which is equal to a cent and a half in American money. While this is enough to keep them from actual starvation, it goes but a little way toward satisfying their needs. Poverty and hunger seem to have taken away most of the common traits of humanity and left them almost like animals. They quarrel and fight over their common possessions, and personal gifts are sometimes taken away by force and sold and the proceeds divided.

Early in the year when the Sewing Guild's boxes came I gave each of the women and the baby, a dress. Imagine my surprise when I was called upon the next day to rescue them from the hands of the men who were about to sell them. Realizing the extreme need that had caused the men to act thus, we gave them each a cheap garment, and so the women did not have to lose their pretty dresses.

We cannot stop and see all the lepers today, but we must not pass by Zahara. If you could learn to know her as we and others of our missionaries who have lived in Muscat know her, I am sure your hearts would go out to her as ours have done. She is so gentle and



TREATING PATIENTS NEAR MUSCAT.

lovable. Most of the lepers come from the very lowest classes and the life in the colony is not unlike that to which they are accustomed. But Zahara's people, though reduced to extreme poverty, are very respectable, and we know how hard it was for her to leave her mother's home to come here and live intimately with people so low and coarse. She does not complain, however, and tries by example and precept to teach them that kindness and love are better than abuse. She helps Faidu to bathe and dress the baby, sees to it that the blind man gets his portion of whatever is given them in common, and frequently shares her few *picc* with some one of the poor Baluchis, who live near the leper huts.



Nearly five years ago, Zahara first came to us for medical help. The disease was not very far advanced then, but it was commonly reported that she had leprosy, and the people frequently threatened to petition the Sultan to send her to the leper colony. While we feared she could not be cured, we were glad to give her what relief we could. From the first she showed great interest in the Bible, seeming to be much impressed with its teaching. She also began attending the Sunday services, which she enjoyed the more because knowing how to read, she could join in the singing of the hymns and the reading of the psalms.

For more than two years the advance of the disease was scarcely perceptible, but she gradually grew worse, and finally the much dreaded order came from the Sultan that she must go to the leper colony. She cannot come to us as often as formerly, but being allowed to visit her mother twice a week, she arranged for one of the visits to fall on Sunday so as not to miss the church services. Sitting on the veranda by the open window, she is one of our most attractive listeners. On her other visiting day she and her mother come for a Bible lesson. When reading about Christ healing the sick she often says: "If He were here now He would heal me." There is no doubt but that she loves Christ and is striving to live according to the teaching of the Scriptures, which she reads faithfully. We believe she is near the kingdom, but we long to see her fully entering in. Pray for Zahara that she may have faith to be spiritually healed, and for her fellow sufferers that they, too, may be led to the Great Healer.

And will you not also pray God to open a way whereby all the lepers in this part of Arabia may have the gospel brought near to them? Every large town has its leper colony, and in this land where the love of Christ has not yet softened people's hearts and taught them to relieve the sufferings of their fellowmen, none are more in need of our sympathy and help than these poor outcasts.—*The Mission Gleaner*.

ELIZABETH G. CANTINE.

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### A Day in Bahrein.

Wouldn't it be splendid if you could pay us a visit in Bahrein? Let us imagine that you really have come as a delegation from our Church to find how it seems to be a missionary in Arabia.

It is a great day for us when we go out to join you on the Persian Gulf Steamer which has brought you from Bombay to our pearl fishing island of Bahrein, and we are delighted beyond measure with this opportunity to introduce you to the land of our adoption.

A native boat manned by its half naked negroes, chanting their weird Oriental song, with each heave of the ropes, brings us to shallow water, where we mount the backs of donkeys and so reach dry land. It is not very far from our landing place to the Mission Compounds, but our walk will give us many glimpses of Bahrein life. We are soon in the very heart of the bazaar, winding our way through the narrow, dirty, illsmelling streets, lined with open shops and booths where bearded Arabs are drinking coffee and exposing their cheap imported wares for sale. We are followed by a mob of staring, noisy, men and boys. A loud voice calls in Arabic, "Get out of the way," and



LANDING FROM THE STEAMER.

we line up along the side of the street to let a large camel pass, with his load of goat skins filled with water. We mop our brows and wonder if our pith hats and umbrellas are really enough protection against the relentless rays of the tropical sun. If you could only have come in March or April you would have pronounced the Bahrein climate delightful!

Now we have left the bazaar, and make our way along a maze of paths between bare crumbly native houses of mud and coral, among hundreds of squatty mud huts, now past wells where jesting, splashing crowds of men and negro women wash their clothes, bathe, and then carry away skins of water for drinking purposes. We pass dignified Arab men with their erect stature and flowing robes, shrouded unrecognizable women, and little children, dressed gaily or not at all. The

little girls love to run along, taking our hands, or calling from their houses; "Salaam Khatoun"; (Lady) nor are we allowed to forget the animal population of Bahrein, for in our way are numerous donkeys, horses, sheep, goats, chickens, cats and dogs—most of them alive.

Now there is more breathing space, and there, right at hand are the mission buildings, with their broad verandas, and irrigated patches of green trees, a welcome sight after the long stretches of dry, hot sand. There are two good mission dwellings, accommodating eight mission-



MISSION BUILDINGS, BAHREIN.

aries, a good sized hospital, and a chapel of which the lower floor is used for a school.

Maybe you will be surprised to see how cozy and comfortable our homes are, that is because the Reformed Church is so good to its missionaries.

Shall we pay the school a short call? Here we find young Arab boys in their 'teens studying Arabic grammar, English, Mathematics, Geography, etc. They are from some of the best families in Bahrein, and will greet us in a very gentlemanly manner and probably in English. In the next room we find dear little girls, mostly from the poorer Persian families. They are very lively and love Mrs. Dykstra, their teacher, dearly. We are shown patch-work quilts which they have sewed. They will sing for us and show us how well they know the alphabet.

Let us visit the hospital now. Upstairs there is a nice white operating room, and two wards, one for women and one for men. Downstairs we will leave the men of our party to enter the men's clinic, where

we see long rows of men seated on chairs. Let us women go into the women's clinic. Are these women—these crouching black heaps on the floor? Yes, Moslem women. "Salaam Alaykum" we greet them, and from behind the black coverings comes the response, "Alaykum es salaam." Gradually after much peeping and whispering, most of the veils are withdrawn, hesitatingly, for they find it hard to be sure from our clothes, whether we are men or women. It does not take them long, however, to become very much interested in their American guests,—and many of them are very friendly. After a short, very simple, Bible talk and prayer to which some listen, upon which some turn their backs,



SCHOOL ROOM.

the clinic begins. You say, "What terrible eyes these people have!" Yes, it is very pitiful to find even the eyes of little babies approaching total blindness because they have been too long neglected. There are coughs, many ulcers, rheumatism, and very much malaria. Many are the pitiful tales we hear of divorces because of sickness; for a Moslem can divorce his wife with a word, or of places usurped by new wives, for a Moslem can lawfully have four wives at a time. There are some patients who need operations,—and we long to relieve the suffering that has resulted from the unspeakable methods of native "quacks." And so the women pass by, poor degraded, downtrodden women, hardly ever pretty, old while yet young, sick and miserable.

We must make at least one call to a native house. The men will visit one of the sheikhs, perhaps, I should like to take you women to

visit some negro woman in her little datestick hut. She has much more freedom than her Arab sisters, and will listen eagerly to what we tell her of Christ. But since our time is short let us go into the more aristocratic houses, that we may see the life of Arab women at its best. In many such households, the women never are allowed to venture beyond the four walls of their houses.

Here is the gate,—a big wooden gate in the stone wall. They would laugh if we should knock, for the Arabs never knock before entering. Negro slave women greet us profusely in the court yard,



NATIVE HOUSE.

and conduct us up winding, shockingly dirty stairs, to the reception room, where we are to await the mistress of the house. It is a beautiful room, carpeted with soft Persian rugs, and bordered with numerous divans with silken cushions, and with here and there a chair, a lamp, or some other imported luxury.

They are coming! We hear the rustle of silks and they enter slowly and with dignity. Some of them are very beautiful with their soft, dark eyes, long glossy black braids, silken draperies and jewels. We exchange many salaams and formal greetings. At first the women are a little shy in the presence of so many American guests. Soon, however, there is a flourishing conversation, chiefly on the subject of matrimony and wearing apparel. "Don't you use oil on your hair?"

"Don't you blacken your eyelids, and color your hands and feet red with henna?" "Would you mind taking off your hats, so that we may see your hair?"

They cannot understand why any grown woman should be unmarried, for their girls marry in their early 'teens. Of those who are married they ask, "How many wives has your husband?" "Only one! Will he never have more than one wife?" "How strange!" "Will your husband never divorce you?" "Do you eat with him?" "Does he consider you his equal?" "Wonderful!" Not long ago one Arab bride acknowledged, "Yes, your way is better, but what can we do?"

Now refreshments are brought in. First come fruits, melons and grapes, on pretty China, which they tell us with pride, "came from Bombay." Then there is the usual very sweet hot milk, flavored with tea, and after that very bitter black coffee without sugar or cream. "You have brought a book," they say, "Won't you read to us?" If they knew how much we long to read to them! So we select a very simple passage about Jesus and his love,—and they listen very politely to the story and the explanation. Sometimes we fear that they are impressed more by the fact that we can read, for Moslem women are seldom educated at all, than by the message. Then too, they often know so little about the real meaning of their own religion, that they scarcely realize that ours is different. But we know some of the seed which we sow takes root,—and we know that it is ours to sow beside all waters, and that Christ will take care of the results, and so we leave them and they beg us to come again.

It is sunset. Such a glorious, fiery, sunset, with the outlines of nearby date gardens in graceful relief against the glowing sky. Just outside our gate a Moslem crier is giving the call to prayer from the tower of a mosque and all around we see men standing, kneeling, prostrating themselves toward Mecca in their evening prayer. Soon it grows dark, save for the soft starlight from our Arabian skies. The Moslems are chanting in their mosques, "There is no God, except Allah" over and over again, until we wonder if the rhythm can be broken.

You will not ask as do some visitors, "Do you not despair of ever making any impression on this fanatical country?" You know, and we know, that we are here at the command of Him, to whom all things are possible. And you, as you have prayed, have seen the answer to your prayers in the ever increasing number of opening doors from which we were formerly barred out. You know too, that we cannot get missionaries fast enough to take up the work waiting to be done. Best of all, you know, that there are lives in Arabia which have been actually transformed by the Light which has found its way so quietly into this country; and we believe with all our hearts that in this gen-

eration shall come the time, when into the heart of Arabia, the Cradle of Islam, that Light shall have penetrated and proved itself the Life of Men. Do you wonder that we are glad to be your missionaries in Arabia?

ELEANOR TAYLOR CALVERLEY.

## The Converts' Conference, at Zeitoun, Egypt.

The eagerly-anticipated "Second Conference of Converts from Islam" has come and gone, leaving both workers and converts greater blessings coupled with greater responsibilities.

It was a truly cosmopolitan and very happy company that met on Tuesday evening, 30th August for the opening prayer-meeting.

While the majority were Egyptians, there were several Syrians from the Holy Land and from northern Syria, with Nubians, Sudanese, one Persian and one Bedouin. About 35 converts stayed the period arranged, *i.e.*, three days and four nights,—but others were not able to stay more than one day, or even one meeting, and these brought up the number to about 50 in all.

*The Expected.* We had anticipated a happy time in the large tent, making friendship and renewing old ones, and enjoying spiritual conversation and informal talks, and we found it as delightful as expected. Then how interesting to watch the fraternising of Sudanese and Syrian, Effendi and Evangelist, Cairene and Fellaheen.

At the "Mutual Acquaintance" meeting on the Wednesday afternoon, no less than 38 gave experiences in leaving the religion of Islam to find rest and peace in Christ. On the Friday afternoon many testified to blessing received at this Conference.

*The Unexpected.* Some had not expected to find prayer so difficult, and the fight so hard, as was the case the first two days. On the Thursday, more particularly, it was said, "The addresses are all right, and there is some blessing, but we are needing much more brokenness of Spirit, more sense of sin, and consequent power in prayer." Not all the attenders knew how this was ultimately obtained for them. Not all of them knew of the little band that settled down to "pray through" immediately after the main morning meeting on Thursday. Right on through the dinner-hour without intermission, during the afternoon meeting, and on until 5:30 the "Upper-Room Company" fought a good fight. On again in the evening, until weariness and the lateness of the hour obliged adjournment at 11:15 p. m.

But it was not until Friday that the fuller blessing came. The worker who conducted the first half of the meeting gave an opening word upon John 7: 37, 38. A spirit of prayer came upon us, and numbers prayed to the point, *i.e.*, that rivers of blessing might flow from

them. Then the address was given, and a touching Arabic hymn sung as a solo. Finally, another address, and then we settled down to the business of "getting right with God" upon our knees. Confession, prayer, intercession, followed. Then up sprang a young effendi, who on two succeeding days had been on the point of going home because he felt so hard, and told how the Lord had spoken to him that evening. After dismissal, we heard of much more. No less than four Moslems had come to the conference with the converts, and these all yielded to the Lord Jesus. Others, who had made before the beginning of the meetings just a head-acceptance of Christ, were to be found in the tent telling of having "seen Jesus" and their brokenness of spirit told of reality. Others discussed the "deeper life," and one bright young lad did not want to go away, to leave Paradise, as he said.

*Some of the Practical Results.* One man followed the example of the Korean Christians and undertook to devote certain time each month to direct evangelistic effort, as his share of the offertory.

Another has had it laid upon his heart to do something for the servants, and has started a free reading-class, to teach them to read the Gospel.

More than one worker met with God, and got watered himself whilst watering others. One, at least, feels that he must go in for more direct, "militant" prayer, even though that involve rearrangement of plans.

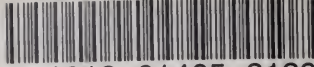
Then there was the thought given to one worker that some definite number of souls should be aimed at. Private prayer was offered that the leader might feel led that way. One felt led to ask that five hundred converts be aimed at, but before he could get the words uttered another rose and suggested that very number. Thus was the same guidance given to three of God's children almost simultaneously. It was taken up with great heartiness, and all rose covenanting to work and pray for five hundred converts from Islam during the next year! Those who know the hardness of the work in Moslem lands may open their eyes; but note the following. On the very same day, 3,500 miles away, a child of God was posting out to us a handbook for translation into Arabic, telling of the Korean movement whereby the Christians there are aiming at *one million* souls. As they have probably 100,000 converts thus far, the ratio is not very dissimilar. This grand enterprise can only be brought to a successful issue by truly fervent prayer.

ARTHUR T. UPSON,  
Supt. Nile Mission Press,  
Cairo, Egypt.





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